

AS SEEN FROM THE PRESS — GALLERY, EDMONTON

The very first session of the eleventh legislature of Alberta came to a conclusion on Tuesday, but its work did not reach many satisfactory conclusions. There was a listlessness and lack of the usual fire in the debates and only on a very few occasions did anything awaken the gathering to temporary life. Even the galleries felt the unusual calm; nine tenths of the spectators who honored the assembly by their presence were high school students brought there to see how the wheels of legislature go round. They must have gone away with an inadequate opinion of the importance and the dignity of the parliamentary system as demonstrated in Alberta.

Old stagers in the house were all agreed the session was the ugliest, drowsiest drabdest one on record. The fact of the matter is that the steamroller tactics of the government in putting through its legislation without help from the opposition or suggestion from the public opinion is beginning to pall on everybody, including the Social Credit members themselves. No government is so inflexible that it can afford to defy or ignore public opinion, and the Social Credit government in Alberta is doing just that.

Take its treatment of the margarine question. When the session had been a short time on its way, the minister of Agriculture introduced a bill that was adequate and sensible enough to protect the interests of both the dairymen and the consuming public. It provided that margarine should only be sold when packaged in such a way as to make it plain that it was margarine and not butter. What more could the dairymen desire? The only other thing would be that margarine should be made so unattractive in appearance that the consumer would not want to buy it. In other words margarine should be put on an unequal handicap in its competition with butter. Mr. U're, the minister of Agriculture, however let himself be over-influenced by the pressure group of the dairymen and "amended" the bill so that margarine can now be sold when colored yellow. Butter is always colored—why discriminate?

The dairymen claim they need the market for their butter and doubtless most consumers would like to buy butter, but when the price is so high that poor people cannot afford it, why should the government place an equally good substitute under a handicap? There is nothing dishonest about coloring margarine, any more than there is in coloring butter.

Liberal Leader, J. Harper Prowse, tried to bring some semblance of sanity into the amended margarine control bill, but his amendment designed to safeguard a large share of the butter market for the dairymen, had no chance with the government. It came from the wrong side of the house—that was what killed it. Mr. Prowse moved an amendment to the amendment that "no margarine be allowed to be sold in restaurants or hotel dining rooms." That would have practically protected a very large market for butter. But the minister of Agriculture and his colleagues rejected the help of anybody in solving the problem. Now margarine

is under a discriminatory act can only be sold in its "natural color" which normally is ivory. It would be surprising if the manufacturers are able to find some other ingredient for making margarine, the "natural color" of which will be yellow. What will Hon. David U're do then with his foolish discriminatory legislation? Amend it, of course. There haven't been many pieces of legislation introduced by the Social Credit Government in 13 years that haven't

had to be amended.

More than half of the time of the legislature each year is taken up with discussing amendments to bills passed in previous years, and not necessarily by previous governments. The government of Alberta seems to be misled by its assurance of continued success and its conceit of its own infallibility that it is ignoring public opinion and coming dangerously close to ignoring public interest in some directions. It has suffered

from several blunders recently whether it realizes it or not. Its attitude toward the I.O.D.E. child welfare investigation did it no good. Its ignoring of the wish of a majority of the farmers in its grain marketing bill's provisions in this session has not helped it any; and its lack of consideration for the consumers in the margarine question has given it a bad crack. But "those whom the gods desire to destroy they first make mad."

SO LONG AS
So long as day shall follow night—so long
As there are stars and wind and even song,
And old sweet Mothers rocking by the fire,
And still sweet April nights and young desire,
So long as these are here serene—complete—
So will the core of life be sound and sweet,
So long as children love to play and run,
And little kindly deeds are thought—and done,
So long as tired feet come home at night,

And there is fresh cooked food and sunlight,
And gentle hands and shoulders wide and strong,
There will be strength to bear the world along.
So long as rainbows flaunt their colors seven,
Above the darkness of a storm-swept heaven,
So long as seeds, dark 'prisoned in the land,
Shall burst their tiny cells and grow—and stand
A shining miracle above the sod.
So long as these are here—there will be God.

—Edna Jaques.

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